



The President's Daily Brief

April 13, 1976

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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LEBANON: Syria has moved no additional troops to the Lebanese border area since the weekend.

The major elements of three Syrian brigades are still along the border and remain in control of the Damascus-Beirut highway between the border and the road junction a few miles south of Zahlah. [REDACTED] 25X1

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Israeli leaders are still avoiding public comment on the situation in Lebanon. The Israeli press has generally followed the government's lead and avoided dramatizing Syria's actions. Many commentators, however, are expressing misgivings about the government's restraint.

Some fighting occurred yesterday in the Beirut hotel district and several areas in the suburbs and the mountainous areas east of the city. Although the clashes have subsided, a wave of kidnappings has kept tensions high. Other areas of the country are relatively quiet.

Officials close to President Franjiah have told the US embassy that Franjiah will sign the amendment to the constitution providing for his departure before this Thursday. There has been no breakthrough, however, in the debate over Franjiah's successor. [REDACTED] 25X1

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The Soviet navy, meanwhile, continues to maintain a close watch on the US naval task force anchored southeast of Crete. The Soviets have four surface warships, some support ships, and probably several submarines in the area of the 11-ship US force, which includes the aircraft carrier Saratoga.

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CHINA: The rallies throughout the country since April 8 to mark the dismissal of Teng Hsiao-ping and the appointment of Hua Kuo-feng as premier and as first vice chairman of the party have been well organized and orderly. They seem to be designed to contrast with the unruly demonstrations of April 5 and to convey an impression of popular support for the new personnel decisions.

Participants in the rallies included several provincial officials who had not previously lent their public support to the campaign against Teng as well as some others who had been under attack. While it is likely that most of these provincial leaders are now anxious to disassociate themselves from Teng, the prominent role they have taken at the rallies suggests they are not under serious political pressure and that the campaign against Teng will not spread to other political moderates.

Most of China's powerful regional military commanders took part in the rallies. There have been virtually no military rallies of this sort since the Lin Piao "coup" of 1971. The sudden emergence of the military in a political connection suggests that prominent military figures may have played an important role in piecing together last week's apparent compromises. It is possible that political pressure against the military may now ease.

In contrast to the public appearance of several moderate leaders, China's leading leftists have not

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appeared since the announcement on Hua and Teng. Their absence is conspicuous and further suggests that the party's left wing is not entirely satisfied with the outcome of the anti-Teng campaign.

The dismissal of Teng is probably no more popular in the provinces than was the campaign against him. The Chinese populace undoubtedly has been unsettled by the sudden leadership changes. Some Chinese officials abroad have reacted to the situation with uncertainty and concern.

Hua Kuo-feng's ability to head a leadership coalition effectively remains a question mark. Hua does not appear to have a power base of his own. As a relative newcomer to the highest levels of the regime, he lacks the experience and the ties to important second-level figures that both Chou En-lai and Teng Hsiao-ping possessed. Although Hua's political roots are in Hunan, Mao's home province, there is no evidence that he is personally particularly close to the Chairman.

The leadership clearly needs a mediator like Chou En-lai, but it is far from certain that Hua can function effectively in that capacity. Others in the leadership, notably leftist Politburo members Chang Chun-chiao and Wang Hung-wen, may have had their eye on one or the other of Hua's new jobs and may harbor some resentment toward him. Hua probably can count on the cooperation of moderates in the leadership for implementation of policies, but he will have to tread a careful path between pursuing relatively moderate policies and giving sufficient weight to the left's interest in political struggle.

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NOTES

CYPRIOT police prevented anti-American demonstrators in Nicosia yesterday from penetrating US embassy grounds.

Some of the 1,000 demonstrators managed to get through two of three police lines, but they were eventually forced back by tear gas. A five-man delegation was subsequently allowed to deliver a letter to the embassy protesting the new US-Turkish Defense Cooperation Agreement and its alleged consequences for Cyprus.

Knowledge that Greek Foreign Minister Bitsios is visiting Washington to discuss additional military assistance for Greece could bring cancellation of other demonstrations scheduled over the next few weeks. Athens fully supported the firm handling of yesterday's demonstration.

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Two of the USSR's most prominent Jewish activists have told US embassy officials in Moscow of the "shock and concern" felt by Soviet Jews over the demonstrations and violence directed by Jewish extremists at the Soviet UN mission in New York.

Both men said they have tried to pass on through their contacts with Western newsmen in Moscow the "revulsion" that Soviet Jews feel at this kind of activity, believing it to be wholly counterproductive to their cause. They agreed that the events in New York could result in more official intransigence than ever toward all would-be Jewish emigrants, as well as such activists as themselves who have been repeatedly denied exit permits.

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